

John 11:1–53—Raising of Lazarus

Romanos the Melodist (ca. 485–85) was a Byzantine liturgical poet associated with the Orthodox Church in Syria. He is known for having composed *kontakia*, chanted sermons presented in verse with refrains for congregational participation. Each *kontakion* consists of a prelude and thirteen to twenty-four metrically identical stanzas, each of which concludes with the same refrain.

Here is the first verse from Romanos's *kontakion* on the raising of Lazarus. The verses would have been sung from the pulpit, accompanied by music. The italicized line would have been sung by a choir or, probably, the entire congregation. The story on which this *kontakion* is based may be found in John 11:1–53.

O Christ, Thou who knowest all things,
Thou hast asked to learn where the tomb of Lazarus is,
And arriving there, Thou hast raised him up on the fourth day,
O All-powerful One,
Taking pity, Merciful One, on
The tears of Mary and Martha.